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# CONFERENCE *connection*

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SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

September 15, 2021

## Closing Comments

Connections and stability were the two themes that I heard when I was asked to be the Transitional Conference Minister in January 2019. It made sense to me. I began by visiting churches 3 out of 4 Sundays a month. I kept a list to be sure I visited everyone. Then in March 2020, COVID hit: churches shut down, travel was suspended, and many churches were left on my “to visit” list. In 2019, I worked with Heather to find ways to bring more organization and stability to the Conference ministry. Then COVID hit and in addition, we witnessed many visual images of racial injustice. Therefore, as staff, we needed to move in other directions to provide support, information, and encouragement in different ways. Our faith reminds us that mission and ministry is never stagnant, but always ongoing and changing as the world around us changes.



This is my last article for the *Conference Connection* as Transitional Conference Minister. On September 27, Rev. Kimberly Wood will begin as Conference Minister. I am excited for Rev. Wood! This is an amazing Conference that includes some unique and dedicated communities of faith and clergy that provide varying witnesses to God's deeply rooted love for all people. She will be blessed as she has the opportunity to meet you, learn some of the histories of churches that have laid the foundation for the present, and hear of your hopes for the future.

I want to thank you for your graciousness toward me. In the UCC Book of Worship, there is a Service of Farewell that we commonly use in local churches when a pastor leaves. The Service includes sentences asking for

forgiveness of mistakes made. Yes, I have made some mistakes, failed to provide support to some who needed it, and did not fulfill expectations that I had created for myself. I ask your forgiveness and hope that my shortcomings are not placed upon Rev. Wood as she begins.

Another part of the Service of Farewell is the vows of release, acknowledging that the professional relationship is concluding. That means that as of September 27, I will no longer be answering the current Conference Minister phone number – it will be Rev. Wood's phone number. I will also no longer have a Conference email address. Questions and requests for the Conference Minister will go directly to Rev. Wood (however, nothing changes for Rev. Heather Fosburgh's contact information or position). I will also "disappear for a while" from Conference events, including zoom meetings, as Rev. Wood builds relationships within the Conference.

Let me conclude by saying "thank you!" You have been a gift to me! I have so appreciated and been enriched by the opportunity to visit churches, hear stories, and work with some amazing church leaders. I also need to publicly thank the Conference staff who have taught me much and supported the work we have done together: Don Harris as Director of Communications; Minister Carrole Moss as Generosity Coordinator; and Rev. Heather Fosburgh, as Associate Conference Minister and Administrator. They have taught me much and have been constantly supportive as we have worked together to support the mission and ministry of the Southeast Conference. I am grateful!

As I retire again, be assured that you will all continue in my prayers as we work to be active witnesses to God's presence and God's love, working to create the beloved community.

Blessings, Char Burch

## News from the Conference Office

### From the Generosity Coordinator

Greetings, it's that time of year again! Cycle 2, 2021 Transforming Churches, Transforming Lives grant will be available September 15th and the cycle will end October 25, 2021. Please visit our website: SECUCC.org for grant information and applications. Please read the instructions carefully and follow the directions to ensure that all of the needed and necessary information is included to complete the process.



Our Capital Campaign has been a huge success over the past several years and MANY of our churches have benefited from this initiative. Priority will be given to those FIRST TIME applicants this cycle. It is our intent to reach and serve the wider church.

Special thanks to all those whose support has never wavered. We appreciate you for all the ways you continue to make this Southeast Conference United Church of Christ great!! Should you have questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me directly.

Blessings, as we continue to journey...  
Min. Carrole Moss

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**Tenth Annual  
Retired  
UCC Servants Retreat**

*Event promises intellectual stimulation,  
spiritual enlightenment, reflection and renewing friendships  
and/or making new friends for retired UCC clergy, missionaries,  
volunteer ministry workers and spouses of the  
Southeast and Southern Conferences of the United Church of Christ.  
Retreat is co-sponsored with Blowing Rock Conference Center.*

## Make Plans to Attend the Retired Servants Retreat

Join fellow retired UCC ministry servants for the Tenth Annual retreat, October 11-13, 2021 in Blowing Rock, NC. The event promises intellectual stimulation, spiritual enlightenment, reflection, and renewing of friendships and/or making new friends. This event is for retired UCC clergy, missionaries, volunteer ministry workers and spouses of the Southeast and Southern Conferences of the United Church of Christ. The retreat is co-sponsored with Blowing Rock Conference Center.

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## Installation of Rev. Scott Cox at Central Atlanta

Save the date! On October 10, 2021, Rev. Scott Cox will be installed as the Senior Minister at Central Congregational UCC in Atlanta at their 11 am worship service. There will be an opportunity to join either in person or online for this Rev. Scott's service of installation. Look for RSVPs and more details in our next Conference Connection.

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## Clergy Zoom Connections for September

- **An Hour of Conversations and Prayer**  
Tuesday, September 21, 28 - 11:00 a.m. Eastern (10:00 a.m. Central); Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/479440102>
  - **Live Harp Meditations for Ministers**  
Thursday, September 16 - 12:00 p.m. Eastern (11:00 Central)  
20 minutes of meditation with Celtic harp. Silent prayer and reflection following if desired, facilitated by Rev. Jean Norton. (For questions or to sign up for individual Therapeutic Harp Sessions, contact Jean at [HeartSongJean@gmail.com](mailto:HeartSongJean@gmail.com).)  
Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/96976838422>
  - **Especially for Specialized Ministers**  
Tuesday, September 28, 2021 - 9:30 a.m. Eastern (8:30 a.m. Central)  
Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/354744689>
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## Re-Opening of Churches – Conversation for all Church Leaders

- **Monday, September 27 - 7 pm Eastern/6 pm Central**  
Many churches are moving to in-person worship. This is an opportunity to learn about each other's experiences,



recommendations, etc. We invite all Moderators, Church Leaders, and Clergy to be part of the conversation. [REGISTER](#)

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## Prayer List

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2021. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

### Week of September 19

- Church of the Savior; Knoxville, Tennessee
- Gregg Carlson
- Douglas Hunt
- Kate Stulce
- Susan Webeler

### Week of September 26

- Liberty Congregational Christian UCC; Brantley, Alabama
- Jeremy Rutledge
- Bob Hurst
- Cindy Barto

## Churches in Transition

First Congregational, Montgomery AL; First Congregational, Savannah GA; Trinity Congregational, Athens AL; Rush Memorial, Atlanta GA; United Church of Cookeville, Cookeville TN; Holy Trinity Community Church,

Nashville TN; First United Church, Belvidere TN; Pleasant Hill Community Church, Pleasant Hill TN

## News from the Wider Church



### OCWM Thank You Video

Our Church's Wider Mission contributions are crucial to both the Southeast Conference and the National setting of the church. Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer has shared this video of thanks for our support of the national setting of the church. The video can also be [downloaded from YouTube](#) and shared by local churches in worship or other settings.

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## Neighbors in Need Special Mission Offering

The 2021 Neighbors in Need “Unfailing Love” offering is focused on supporting organizations and projects serving our homeless and immigrant neighbors and communities. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC’s Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to provide funding grants to UCC churches and organizations leading justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects in their communities.

**Most churches collect the offering on October 3, 2021** as part of World [Communion Sunday](#), but contributions can be made at any time. Click here for all the NIN 2021 information and PDF downloads.

## News from our Local Congregations



## Installation Celebration for Rev. Courtney Jones

On Saturday, September 11, 2021, Pilgrimage United Church of Christ and the Southeast Conference celebrated the installation of Rev. Courtney Jones as the Pastor of Pilgrimage UCC in Marietta. Rev. Jones' installation was a long time coming as she began at Pilgrimage in February 2020 shortly before the pandemic began. It was wonderful to celebrate both in-person and online with Rev. Johnny R "JR" Finney, pastor of Covenant Community UCC in Birmingham, AL bringing the sermon for our celebration, encouraging Pilgrimage, and all of us, to lean into the new ways we are being called to be the church. Welcome, Rev. Courtney!!

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## South Carolina church's tiny house project back on track

by [Connie Larkman](#), UCC Staff

A small but determined South Carolina congregation is building a “safe house” for an LGBTQ person in need of housing because of who they are. The church’s dream, funded with a [Neighbors in Need](#) grant in 2017, is taking time to become reality. But [Peace Congregational Church, UCC](#), in Clemson will not let construction difficulties or COVID-19 stop the completion of its tiny house project.

The tiny house project stalled for a while during the pandemic, but Peace Church didn’t give up. “In mid-August we identified a new location for the tiny house, on a farm that is active in collaborative living,” Usher said. “The owner, a member of a local food co-op that one of us belongs to, met with two men from our church and liked the vision Peace Church has for the tiny house.” The house moved to Startooth Farm last weekend. Plans for the interior layout are complete and construction should be finished before the end of the year.

Read the full article on the UCC website: [ucc.org/south-carolina-churchs-tiny-house-project-back-on-track/](https://ucc.org/south-carolina-churchs-tiny-house-project-back-on-track/)

**Trainings and Conferences**



## 2021 UCC Southern Regional Women's Retreat Registration Open

The Planning Committee for the 2021 UCC Southern Regional Women's Retreat would like to invite you to participate in a Virtual Retreat on ZOOM on October 2, 2021 – 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. [Registration is extended to Sept 27.](#)

This program will provide an overview of the October 14-16, 2022, "In-Person" UCC Southern Regional Women's Retreat to be held at Camp Weed in Live Oak, Florida. We will have a chance to fellowship and worship with old and new friends from all parts of the Southern Region (the area from Texas to Virginia). Our guest speaker/presenter for both retreats will be Rev. Dr. Georgia A. Thompson, UCC Associate General Minister of Wider Church Ministries and Co-Executive for Global Ministries.

You are encouraged to watch at home or any location you select, by yourself or with a group of fellow UCC Women. Visit [this page](#) for more details.



## Copyright Concerns for Ministries

During these challenging times, ministries rely heavily on the virtual environment and various electronic mediums to share the printed forms of inspiring poetry, quotes from prayer books and daily affirmations, as well as words from songs during worship and through other forms of ministry.

As a result, some ministries have been shocked to discover they are actually in violation of copyright infringement; join the Insurance Board on September 29th at 2:00 p.m. EST as Heather Kimmel General Counsel, United Church of Christ, offers valuable information on how to help your ministry avoid this situation. [REGISTER](#)

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## Healthy Boundaries for Retired Ministers

Retired ministers who do not serve as pastors in a local church but who may preach periodically, officiate at weddings, funerals, etc. now have the option to attend a special Healthy Boundaries Course focused on issues faced by retired ministers. The course fulfills the four-year requirement for Southeast Conference clergy. (Fee is \$35). The course will be held in-person on two dates:

- Wednesday, October 6 at Central Congregational, Atlanta; 11 am to 3 pm Eastern / 10 am to 2 pm Central
  - Wednesday, October 20 at Pleasant Hill Community Church, Pleasant Hill, TN; 11 am to 3 pm Eastern / 10 am to 2 pm Central
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## Build Church Differently - Partners In Building 2021

The UCC Church Building & Loan Fund is pleased to invite you to our Partners In Building (PIB) 2021 virtual event as we all seek to, “Build Church Differently.” Join us on September 22nd and 23rd and hear from innovative faith leaders on a whole range of timely topics.

PIB connects pastors & other church leaders with information on how to repurpose, finance, and manage church-owned property through presentations and workshops. Participants will have the opportunity to hear from and engage with experts including a variety of topics: Keynote Speakers, Navigating Land Use, Repurposing Resources for Mission, Faith-Based Entrepreneurs, Fund Raising, Social Media & Marketing and so much more.

Registration is only \$30 and includes both days. [REGISTER](#).

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## 2022 Midterm Elections Ahead: The Fight for Voting Rights

In states across the country, efforts are underway to significantly erode voting rights. Join the UCC on September 21 at 3:30 p.m. EDT to learn more about these threats, and what steps are being taken at the federal level to address them. You'll leave with a better understanding of the state of democracy in the U.S. and more importantly some concrete actions you can take to protect you and your neighbor's vote. [REGISTER](#)

## Conference Calendar

September 15 - October 25



[Fall 2021 Grant Applications Open](#)

September 16 @ 12:00 pm - 12:30 pm EDT

[Live Harp Meditations for Ministers](#)

September 17 @ 1:45 pm - September 18 @ 12:15 pm EDT

[Healthy Boundaries 101: Fundamentals](#)

September 21 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT

[Clergy Conversations via Zoom](#)

September 27 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EDT

[Re-Opening of Churches – Conversation for all Church Leaders](#)

September 28 @ 9:30 am - 11:00 am EDT

[Zoom Conversation for Specialized Ministers](#)

September 28 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT

[Clergy Conversations via Zoom](#)

October 2 @ 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm EDT

[Southern Region Women's Retreat](#)

View the **full calendar** of events online: <https://www.secucc.org/events/>

## Contact Us

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Generosity Coordinator: **Min. Carrole Moss**; [cmoss@secucc.org](mailto:cmoss@secucc.org)

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